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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: NOVEMBER 24, 2009

Media Reaction Summary: November 24, 2009

Summary: Ambassador Holbrooke's remarks that "Pakistan is being closely consulted" on the ongoing policy-making process on Afghanistan received prominent display in several major newspapers. Pakistan Army Chief General Kayani's statement that the "U.S. would have to take Pakistan on board" while formulating its new Afghan policy dominated headlines on Tuesday. All newspapers highlighted reports and photographs of the rollout ceremony of Pakistan's first JF-17 Thunder aircraft built with Chinese cooperation. Reports of the U.S. "back-channel" talks with Afghan Taliban also received front-page coverage. Also highlighted were remarks of Pakistan's permanent Envoy to the UN Hussain Haroon that "Pakistan is 'proud' of its relationship with the United States." "The Nation" reported that the Interior Ministry has informed the Supreme Court of Pakistan that the "majority of missing persons were sold to U.S. in Afghanistan for millions of dollars by the previous government." In his op-ed in "The News," Senator Mushahid Hussain, advised the government to "wake up from its slumber and get cracking on forging a doable counter-terror strategy, which would be a force multiplier for the ongoing counter-insurgency campaign." End Summary.

#### TOP STORIES

News Story: Pakistan Is Closely Consulted On Afghanistan: Holbrooke "The News" (11/24)

"U.S. official envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke rejected on Monday Islamabad's complaint that the U.S. had not consulted Pakistan as closely as it should have on the ongoing policy-making process on Afghanistan. The U.S., he said, had consulted 'no other country more closely than Pakistan' on this issue because no other country was more directly linked to it." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: U.S. Can't Ignore Pakistan: Kayani "The News" (11/24)

"Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani has stressed that Washington will have to keep Pakistan on board while reviewing its Afghan policy. He said Islamabad has a key role in ensuring and maintaining peace in the region. The Army chief, jubilant over the achievements of his troops first in Swat-Malakand and now in South Waziristan, was informally talking to reporters at the historic ceremony of the rolling out of the JF-17 Thunder multi-role fighter plane of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF)." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: First JF-17 Thunder Handed Over To PAF: Self-Reliance In

Defence Vital For Progress: PM "The News" (11/24)

"Progress and prosperity cannot be achieved without achieving self-reliance in defence production, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani said on Monday. Gilani was addressing a gathering of local and foreign dignitaries and military officials at the handing-over ceremony of the JF-17 Thunder, manufactured with Chinese assistance, to the PAF." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: U.S. In Back-Channel Talks With Afghan Taliban "Dawn" (11/24)

"After fighting a bloody war in Afghanistan for more than eight years, the United States appears to have undertaken a re-think of its policy and has started engaging the Taliban in negotiations through Saudi and Pakistani intelligence agencies, highly-placed sources told 'Dawn' on Monday." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Pakistan 'Proud' of Its Ties With U.S.: Haroon "The Nation" (11/24)

"Pakistan is 'proud' of its relationship with the United States, saying it has always given political, diplomatic and strategic support to American objectives without any quid pro quo, Ambassador Abdullah Hussain Haroon told medical doctors of Pakistani descent at their annual dinner on Saturday night...."

#### TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: Missing Persons Sold To U.S. in Afghanistan, SC Told "The Nation" (11/24)

"Majority of missing persons had been shifted to Kabul first and then handed over to the United States, earning bounties totaling millions of dollars, according to a report on mission persons presented by acting Attorney General Shah Khawar before the Supreme Court of Pakistan."

News Story: 17 Militants Killed In Orakzai Blitz "The News" (11/24)

"Security forces claimed to have killed 17 militants in the Shahukhel area in Orakzai Agency on Monday, while six civilians died when a shell fired by security forces landed in a civilian area in the neighboring Khyber Agency." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Nine Militants Killed In SWA: ISPR "The News" (11/24)

"Nine militants were killed and three soldiers sustained injuries in the ongoing operation Rah-e-Nijaat in South Waziristan Agency on Monday. A media update of the military-run Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said security forces cleared the Golden Top west of Pash Ziarat and Tabai Sar and consolidated their positions around Lakhi Ghund and Bunker ridge on the Razmak-Makeen axis."

News Story: Six Civilians Killed In Landi Kotal Attack "Dawn" (11/24)

"Six civilians were killed and 12 others injured when militants attacked a security post in Landi Kotal bazaar with rockets on Monday. Seven security personnel suffered injuries, an administration official said."

Editorial: A Proud Moment, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (11/24)

"Pakistan has produced its first JF-17 Thunder multi-role combat aircraft, which has been handed over to Pakistan Air Force (PAF).... It is indeed a moment of pride for the Pakistani nation that the country has produced its first indigenously assembled fighter jet.... By producing indigenous aircraft, Pakistan would be saving a lot of money and would not have to depend on countries like the U.S. in the future. In the past, we have had to lose a lot of money when the U.S. backed out of its F-16 deal with us."

Editorial: Magnificent Roll Out Of JF-17, an editorial in the

Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (11/24)

"The skies of Pakistan witnessed one of the most fascinating and thrilling events in the history of the country as the first indigenously co-produced (with China) multi-role fighter aircraft rolled out at Pakistan Aeronautical Complex, Kamra on Monday.... This is indeed a milestone in the defence production arena for a variety of reasons.... On this occasion, the nation also expresses its gratitude to the time-tested friend of the country - China - of which strategic support helped realize this dream. We are confident that it would join hands in other areas of the defence production as well as both of them face similar long-term threats to their respective security."

Editorial: On The Run, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/24)

"As militants from South Waziristan remain on the run, the military is now reported to be moving in after them into the Kurram Agency and more parts of Bajaur. There has also been movement by troops in the Bara tehsil of the Khyber Agency.... It seems that the military has finally realized that there is no option but to go after the militants with all the resolve and force that can be mustered up.... But amidst optimism, we should also remember that the time will come when we will also need to hunt down militants further afield."

Editorial: American Plan Against Afghan Taliban, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (11/24)

"According to a report in New York Times, an anti Taliban militia with the name Community Defense is being established, which is a plan to trigger tribal rebellions. American and Afghan authorities hope this way thousands of people would be integrated in anti-Taliban armed struggle.... American administration should be asked about the justification, under international law, of creating armed gangs."

Opinion: Where's The Counter-Terror Strategy?, an op-ed by Mushahid Hussain in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/24)

"An interesting dynamic seems to be developing in today's Pakistan. There is an inverse relationship between the success of Pakistan's counter-insurgency and the failure of the country's counter-terrorism. Clearly, since the beginning of the military offensive in April, the militants are on the run but, concurrently, they have run amok by striking Pakistan's urban population at a time and target of their own choosing.... Let it not be said that the sacrifices of Pakistan's soldiers and civilians were in vain simply because the ruling elite was too busy pursuing their petty personal interests. The people of Pakistan deserve better; at the minimum, an expectation that the government perform its core duty of protecting their lives and property, an area where the government performance has been one vast failure. There is still time for the government to wake up from its slumber and get cracking on forging a doable counter-terror strategy, which would be a force multiplier for the ongoing counter-insurgency campaign."

Opinion: Peace in Afghanistan, an op-ed by Javid Husain in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (11/24)

"The U.S. is now essentially faced with the tasks of the elimination of Al-Qaeda and its allies in Afghanistan to prevent any further attacks on it and the restoration of peace in that country. The successful completion of these tasks should enable it to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan in an honorable manner.... The U.S. is now at a crossroads. The ongoing review of the Afghan strategy by the Obama Administration provides Washington with a useful opportunity to change course with a view to eliminating the threat of terrorism posed by Al-Qaeda to the U.S. security and taking political initiatives to bring the conflict in Afghanistan between the Pashtuns and the non-Pashtuns to an end. The use of force against Al-Qaeda and its allies should continue to overcome their threat to global and regional security."

Opinion: An Intrusive Power Wielder, an op-ed by Dr. S.M. Rahman in

the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (11/24)

"In nutshell, America's military might has been dwarfed by the rag-tag Afghan freedom fighters and its economic model is under great stress. The hegemonic arrogance of USA cannot linger any further. It needs renunciation of the desire to dominate over the world particularly Eurasia, of which Af-Pak policy is a crude reflection. Engagement with impoverished nations and respect for diversity are the imperatives."

#### INDO-PAK RELATIONS

News Story: U.S. Can't Play Role Of Midwife In Indo-Pak Row: Holbrooke "The News" (11/24)

"Richard Holbrooke, U.S. special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan, has said that the United States wants good relations between India and Pakistan but could not play the role of a midwife to settle the disputes between the two countries. In a special briefing at the U.S. State Department on Monday, he said the U.S. wanted excellent ties between India and Pakistan but these relations were not compatible."

News Story: Indian PM's Visit Won't Affect Ties With Pakistan: U.S. "Daily Times" (11/24)

"The Indian prime minister's visit to Washington does not mean that Pakistan is any less important for the U.S., U.S. special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke said on Monday. He said Washington was seeking to improve relations with Pakistan, India and China. "We want that every country gains from this relationship," he added.

News Story: India Trying To Wriggle Out Of Talks, Says Qureshi "Dawn" (11/24)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Monday that questions raised by India's prime minister about the control of the Pakistani army and the country's aims in Afghanistan were an excuse to delay resumption of talks. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told CNN International television on Sunday he was not clear if Pakistan's president was in control of the army and that the country's objectives in Afghanistan were not necessarily those of the United States. 'I am disappointed,' Qureshi said. 'My feeling is India is dragging its feet and is looking for excuses not to resume the composite dialogue.'"

News Story: India Test-Fires Nuclear Capable Agni At Night "Dawn" (11/24)

"India carried out its first nighttime test of a medium-range missile on Monday, a defense ministry official said. The surface-to-surface 'Agni-II' (Fire) missile - with a range of up to 2,000 kilometers - can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads weighing up to 1,000 kilograms, the official said on condition of anonymity in line with ministry rules."

News Story: Former Jihadi Says LT Running New Camps "Daily Times" (11/24)

"The Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LT) has opened several new training camps in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), a former Lashkar member said. Abdullah Muntazir, who is now an analyst on Islamist issues, said the authorities had closed many Lashkar training camps in AJK after the Mumbai attacks but that had had a limited impact."

Editorial: Listen India!, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/24)

"Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is currently about to experience American hospitality of the type associated with a full-blown state visit. Warily true to form he is using the occasion to deliver unhelpful and negative statements about Pakistan that drip oil on the fires that burn between us.... And do we really use terror as an instrument of state policy - or is it that in geopolitical terms it is currently flavor-of-the-month to present Pakistan as a bubbling pot of wickedness?"

Editorial: Mr. Manmohan Singh, The [Kashmir] Border Will Certainly Be Redefined, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (11/24)

"Indian PM Manmohan Singh is visiting the U.S. at a time when the U.S. is reviewing Afghan policy and in addition to Pakistan's role, is desirous of an Indian role in the new Afghan scenario .... Pakistan has given [U.S.] evidence of Indian involvement [in Balochistan] and has also raised the issue of CIA's interference; this means that the Satanic triumvirate of India-U.S.- Israel is bent upon destabilizing Pakistan]. The Indian PM's statement [that Kashmir's border cannot be re-defined] is also a link in this chain].... Manmohan Singh needs to be reminded that just as Indian borders were redrawn in 1947, so will Kashmir's borders be redefined according to the wishes of the Kashmiris in the shape of accession with Pakistan. Until then, trade with India should be stopped and preparations be made for the final battle with India."

Editorial: Indian PM's Views, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (11/24)

"On the Kashmir issue, the Indian PM has said that Kashmir's border cannot be redrawn, although talks can be held with Pakistan on trade and other issues. This statement by the Indian PM goes against the spirit of harmony created as a result of bilateral talks. It can also be said that India is backtracking.... Unfortunately, the Congress government thinks that in the garb of fighting terrorism, the Kashmiri struggle for independence can also be crushed. We would like to warn that such an attitude can only increase hatred, not resolve disputes."

Editorial: Manmohan Singh's Trip To The U.S. And Pakistan's Reservations, an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 5000) (11/24)

"From his interviews and statements in the U.S., it seems that the Indian PM wants to use this trip to increase Pakistan's political and strategic problems. It is with this intent that he adopted a tone on Kashmir that cannot be called conciliatory at all.... Pakistan also has reservations on India's defense procurements and war preparations. If the U.S. wants our sincere cooperation in the war [on terror] it should review its relations with India and remove Pakistan's misgivings."

Editorial: India's Irrationality, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (11/24)

"The India Prime Minister is setting new records for aggravating the already strained environment between Pakistan and India.... Clearly, the Indian leadership is hitting out at Pakistan because the Pakistani leadership is finally doing some plain talking regarding India's role in fanning terrorism in Balochistan and FATA - and with the apparent blessings of the U.S. which is allowing India to conduct these covert operations from Afghan soil.... This is unfortunate because it cannot hide India culpability in acts of terror in Pakistan.... It is time the U.S. informed its strategic partner's leadership, in the form of a belligerent Manmohan Singh, presently in Washington, that it simply cannot afford to continue its bellicosity towards Pakistan if it wants peace and progress in the region."

Editorial: Indian Designs: Responsibility of Government, Politicians and Military Leadership, an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (11/24)

"India wants to turn Pakistan into a market for its products by promoting trade relations only while putting aside the festering Kashmir issue. New Delhi is using Afghan soil, where it has set up more than a dozen consulates, to destabilize Pakistan through terrorist activities. Moreover, the U.S. military aid and full-scale nuclear cooperation have also rejuvenated India's anti-Pakistan ambitions. It is high time for our political and military leadership to evolve a national strategy to counter Indian conspiracies, especially in light of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the United States and his forthcoming meeting with President Obama."

Editorial: India's Hand, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (11/24)

"Since intelligence sharing between any two countries is a sensitive issue, expecting rivals like Pakistan and India to be instantly forthcoming on this count is not realistic. There is logic in the U.S. stance that governments in Islamabad and New Delhi face a common threat that is terrorism. Partition of the Indian subcontinent is now a fact of history and vision demands that progress be made towards the future with a measured consciousness of history and a trust in the potential of mutual cooperation."

Editorial: Amnesty's Letter to President Barack Obama and Manmohan Singh's Venomous Propaganda Against Pakistan, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (11/24)

"Amnesty International, in its letter to President Obama, has alleged that Indian forces are committing large-scale violations of human rights in the occupied Kashmir Valley. On the other hand, Indian Prime Minister Singh has said that Pakistan wants the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in order to take control of Kabul. We think that after these accusations from a responsible Indian leader, the government of Pakistan must come out of any delusion regarding the peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue, and any future dialogue with New Delhi would be a futile exercise."

Editorial: India: United States' Foolish Friend, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (11/24)

"All indicators show that the U.S. is planning to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. Yet, it is also true that Washington has not rejected other options and New Delhi wants to utilize this aspect of U.S. policy with a view to promote its own interests in the region. The Obama administration is facing tremendous pressure, and only Pakistan can provide any relief to the United States. We advise the U.S. government to beware of India's covert agenda at this critical stage, and take any decision in the larger interest of American people."

#### MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: White House Discusses End To Afghan War "The News" (11/24)

"Participants of a discussion at the White House have called for ending the war in Afghanistan, describing it a misuse of the U.S. taxpayers' money and asked to divide Pakistan into three parts. The discussion, organized by the White House Office for Public Engagement, was held in the Eisenhower Executive Building to devise the future policy on Pakistan and Afghanistan. The participants were told that terrorism could not be eliminated from the region until the Kashmir issue was resolved and the Indian involvement in Balochistan was ended."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Patterson